

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A tarnish inhibiting composition effective to protect a surface of a silver object containing in excess of 90% silver, when the surface is exposed to the composition in a sealed environment, against tarnishing in a molecular oxygen containing atmosphere containing in the range from 1 ppb (parts per billion) to 10 ppm (parts per million) of hydrogen sulfide at a relative humidity of 90% and 37.4°C (100°F), for at least one year, the composition comprising: a substantially non-hydrolyzable polymer having substantially homogeneously dispersed therein from about 0.01% to 5% by weight of an essentially anhydrous scavenger including an alkali metal silicate [[or]] and zinc oxide, in combination with from 0 to 1% of and optionally an inert adjuvant, provided that the polymer has a water vapor transmission rate (WVTR) at least as high as that of low density polyethylene.
2. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 1, wherein the polymer includes low density polyethylene, polypropylene, ethylene/vinyl acetate copolymer, copolymers of lower C₂-C₈ olefins, copolymers of a lower C₂-C₈ olefin and ethylene/vinyl alcohol, non-biodegradable polyester, poly(vinyl chloride), polystyrene, or polyamide, or combinations thereof, or a biodegradable polymer having a WVTR higher than about 1.5 gm/24 hr measured per 0.025 mm (1 mil) thickness and 645 cm² (100 in²) area at 37.4°C (100°F) and 90% RH (relative humidity).
3. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 2, wherein the biodegradable polymer is a polyester including a star ε-caprolactone; ε-caprolactone (PCL); poly(hydroxybutyrate-co-valerate) (PHBV); an uncoated- or nitrocellulose-coated cellophane films; crosslinked chitosan; starch/ethylene vinyl alcohol (St/EVOH) blend film; pure EVOH film (38 mole percent ethylene); or polycaprolactone (PCL), molecular weight about 80,000 Daltons; or combinations thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 3, wherein the alkali metal silicate is a silicate of sodium, and the adjuvant includes fumed silica or calcium carbonate, or combinations thereof, and wherein the adjuvant is present in an amount in the range from 0.01% to 1% by weight.

5. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim [[2]] 21, wherein the composition is transparent, wherein including the adjuvant, is present, wherein the adjuvant comprises calcium carbonate present in an amount of from 0.01% to 1% by weight, and the scavenger wherein said calcium carbonate has the adjuvant, independently, have a primary particle size in the range from about 1 $[\mu\text{m}]$ micron to 53 $[\mu\text{m}]$ microns, and wherein said silicate of sodium, said zinc oxide, and said calcium carbonate are substantially homogeneously dispersed in the polymer.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim [[2]] 1, wherein said polymer is [[said]] a biodegradable polymer, said biodegradable polymer including star ϵ -caprolactone; ϵ -caprolactone (PCL); poly(hydroxybutyrate-co-valerate) (PHBV); an uncoated- or nitrocellulose-coated cellophane film; crosslinked chitosan; starch/ethylene vinyl alcohol (St/EVOH) blend film; pure EVOH film (38 mole percent ethylene); or polycaprolactone (PCL), molecular weight about 80,000 Daltons; or combinations thereof.

10. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 9, wherein the alkali metal silicate is a silicate of sodium, and the adjuvant is fumed silica or calcium carbonate, or combinations thereof, and wherein the adjuvant is present in an amount in the range from 0.01% to 1% by weight.

11. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 10, wherein ~~the composition is transparent, wherein the adjuvant is present and wherein the scavenger and the adjuvant said silicate of sodium, and said zinc oxide, independently, have a primary particle size in the range from about 1 μm to 53 μm and are substantially homogeneously dispersed in the polymer.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim [[2]] 11, wherein ~~said anhydrous scavenger is said alkali metal silicate~~ the amount of said silicate of sodium and said zinc oxide, independently, is from about 0.1% to about 3% by weight.

13. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim [[9]] 2, wherein ~~the alkali metal silicate is a silicate of sodium, wherein said anhydrous scavenger is said alkali metal silicate~~ the amount of said silicate of sodium and said zinc oxide, independently, is from about 0.1% to about 3% by weight.

14. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim [[10]] 13, wherein ~~said anhydrous scavenger is said alkali metal silicate~~ particle size of said silicate of sodium and said zinc oxide, independently, is from about 1 μm to 53 μm and are homogeneously dispersed in the polymer.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Cancelled).

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Cancelled).

20. (New) The composition of claim 4, wherein said silicate of sodium and said zinc oxide are each, independently, present in an amount of from about 0.01% to 3.0% by weight.

21. (New) The composition of claim 20, wherein said silicate of sodium and said zinc oxide each, independently, have a primary particle size of from 1 to 53 microns.

22. (New) The composition of claim 1, said composition being capable of protecting a surface of a silver object containing in excess of 90% silver, when the surface is exposed to the composition in a sealed environment, against tarnishing in a molecular-oxygen containing atmosphere containing in the range from 1 ppb (parts per billion) to 10 ppm (parts per million) of hydrogen sulfide at a relative humidity of 90% and 37.4°C (100°F) , for at least one year.

23. (New) The composition of claim 3, said composition being capable of protecting a surface of a silver object containing in excess of 90% silver, when the surface is exposed to the composition in a sealed environment, against tarnishing in a molecular-oxygen containing atmosphere containing in the range from 1 ppb (parts per billion) to 10 ppm (parts per million) of hydrogen sulfide at a relative humidity of 90% and 37.4°C (100°F) , for at least one year.

24. (New) The composition of claim 21, said composition being capable of protecting a surface of a silver object containing in excess of 90% silver, when the surface is exposed to the composition in a sealed environment, against tarnishing in a molecular-oxygen containing atmosphere containing in the range from 1 ppb (parts per billion) to 10 ppm (parts per million) of hydrogen sulfide at a relative humidity of 90% and 37.4°C (100°F) , for at least one year.